132 133 [3] La Guajira is a semidesert region, a condition to which four essential factors contribute, in our opinion: 1) the presence of sandy soil which absorbs the water of the small arroyos which flow from the mountain ridges; 2) the constant trade winds which blow strongly from the northeast over the peninsula and tend to temper the climate somewhat; 3) the lack of any real relief with elevations of importance which could act as a barrier to the clouds laden with moisture which are blown by the force of the winds toward the interior regions of the continent; 4) the high atmospheric temperatures which reach 42°C. in the shade at noon and are only slightly tempered by the trade winds and sea breezes.

These factors largely determine the hydrography of the peninsula in which, it may be said, there are only two permanent rivers, the Río Hacha, which forms the boundary with the neighboring department of Magdalena, and the arroyo Paraguichón, which marks the boundary with the republic of Venezuela. Beyond this the region is subject to the seasonal cycle of rainfall, which divides itself into a completely dry summer season with only rare light showers in what might be called spring (approximately in April) and a winter season with violent rains. This last season covers approximately the months of September to December/January, while the first, with the exception of the occasional rains in spring already mentioned, covers the remaining months of the year.

133 134 [164] All these facts convert the peninsula during the summer season into a true desert without vegetation, with the earth covered with loose sand, particles of which are blown into the air by the prevailing winds, causing considerable trouble to travelers and even giving rise to eye infections among the natives. But in winter, when the abundant and copious rains have fallen, the soil, which in parts is below sea level, becomes so flooded that at times all land communications are totally obstructed even on improved [herradura] roads; the dry beds of currents of water are converted into true arroyos, water holes into ponds, and everything is an immense sea of fresh water.

133 312 One must also take into account the presence of some few lakes, such as Guaraguarao, near Marañamana; Soledad, 20 kilometers south of Pájaro; Caranda, approximately 30 kilometers west of Ríohacha; Sararapa, near Puerto López; and Cuina,

[6 cont.]

105 However, at the beginning the fundamental change in
177 their economy did not affect their most characteristic social institutions. They preserved, almost to the present, their family organization based on the uterine line of kinship and all the other institutions which derive from, or are directly or indirectly related, to it. Only now with the presence of an ever increasing number of foreign elements who are attracted to La Guajira territory by different circumstances is the Indian gradually losing these fundamental ideas of his organization and beginning to change them, forced to do so by events, to the point that today it is becoming difficult to decide up to what point a social phenomenon is autochthonous and to what point it is impregnated with new ideas brought in by evangelism, government and military officials, and traders.

In the racial aspect the phenomenon shows up less strongly,
171 although, as in other aspects, it has been gradually accelerating
175 as means of communication develop and the contraband between the islands of Aruba and Curaçao, the department of Magdalena, and the port of Maracaibo increase. Racial mixing [mestizaje] began in the colony not only between Spaniards and Indians, as happened in the greater part of Latin America, but also with the Negroes who were acquired as slaves from the Dutch and British slave traders in exchange for pearls. Naturally, this mixture was *of insignificant proportions, but [?] at the present time it is developing* more rapidly, stemming from the element, also Negroid, of the coastal areas of Colombia and Lake Maracaibo. In spite of all this, at the present time one can still find a large percentage of the pure element in La Guajira, especially in the regions distant from the traffic with Maracaibo or with the interior of Colombia, or relatively isolated from civilizado centers of La Guajira such as Urihia, Puerto Estrella, Puerto López, etc.

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132 In the past five to six years La Guajira has suffered extreme-
193 ly severe summers which have almost completely crushed its economic bases, stock grazing and agriculture, for scarcely enough rainfall has fallen to save their pastures or their harvests.

[7 cont.]

Consequently at this time, the Indian faces a situation of misery that has brought him to seek monetary income either as a worker in the maritime saltworks or as a herdsman in the neighboring haciendas of Venezuela and Colombia; or if he is obstinate in his attachment to his native soil, he has to put up with conditions of hunger, bond service, and even slavery in his own territory.

The lack of water has been the main factor leading to the mass emigration of entire native families to the nearest centers of trade and work; there they enroll themselves as paid farm workers; or simply beg for charity, which is frequently seen in the streets and plazas of Maracaibo; or apply themselves to some other trade such as the making of charcoal to be sold in Riohacha; or work in the loading and unloading of ships in neighboring ports.

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All these facts that we have been describing and the little that was known of this interesting Colombian aboriginal community led the Institute of Ethnology and Archaeology of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia to organize an expedition to study for a reasonable period of time the greater part of the characteristic social phenomena of this group of people, the actual social situation of the natives confronted by the new *conditions of life, the anthropological aspect, the language*, etc. This decision was put into effect with the ethnographic expedition of 1947, which, during the months of July, August, and September, traveled over a great part of the territory making the corresponding studies. [8] This expedition was composed of: the investigators, Licentiate Milciades Chaves, Licentiate Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda Giraldo, Señora María Rosa de Recasens, and the author.

The result of these investigations is the work we now present, the first of a series of publications which will cover the major part of the aspects of the material and spiritual life of the Guajiro.

The work to which these few lines serve as an introduction is based on facts carefully gathered by us in the field, especially by my wife Licentiate Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda Giraldo, who kindly handed over data to be studied and added to ours, and we

[112 cont.]

787 825 Another bird of bad augury is thered owl. If a person who is traveling by night along the roa sees one and hears its hoot, this is a signal that a misfortune s about to happen at the spot the walker met the bird or that something will happen to upset him on the road.

If at nightfall the long-drawn outsong of the waimpirai is heard, it is an indication that there will be a war between two important clans, or extended families. They say in La Guajira that on a certain occasion, after this omen had occurred, a struggle between two families broke out and 20 members of the Uriyú clan had to take refuge in the convent 747 628 of Nazaret, defeated by their adversaris who were hunting them down wishing to kill them.

When a hen cackles at daybreak there will surely be a death in the house, particularly when the cackling is repeated on three consecutive days.

312 Natural phenomena in magic. The most important natural phenomenon for the Guajiro is rain, the essential fount for his 134 agriculture and much grazing and the basis of his present-day 183 economic organization. It is not strange that this is so because if for every community and for living beings in general water is an indispensable element and if many of the divinities and spirits of the primitive American cover around it, for the Guajiro it is infinitely more essential if we take into consideration the geographical milieu in which he lives and to which we have referred, perhaps imiserly, in this work as we consider it of vital importance (cf. "Introduction"). In the whole area there is no river or stream of importance. The soil has a maximum permeability and has to withstand high temperatures; [113] and as the Guajiro have no practical knowledge of the conservation and distribution of rain water, they always live dependent on the winter season for sowing heir crops. For 789 this reason many acts of magic have this end in view, but as this aspect will be better understood in the chapter on "Mareiwa and Wanorí," or saviors of good and evil, we will confine ourselves in this section to seeing some magic acts related to rainfall and to other natural phenomena.

987 The intervention of the shaman, which we have lost 1 952 sight of since the second chapter when we described at length his personality and attributes, returns again to participate in

[146 cont.]

174 192 776 821 If we accept the idea that the Guajiro are descended from the Arawak of the Guianas, with whom they are intimately connected both by their language and culture, there is nothing strange to be found in the formation of the name Mareiwa from mali, male (the l and the r do not exist in the Guajiro language), and fwa, words that are used to name stars and in consequence must be related to the general Arawak cosmogony. In any case, 776 821 the linguistic association of star-rain-god-divinity confirms the statement which we have made that Mareiwa [147] is none other than the propitiatory spirit of the rains, and by the same token, that of good harvests, of abundance, and of well-being.

132 182 776 The harsh geographical conditions of La Guajira and the technical incapacity of the native to dominate and put them in his service without incurring the great inconveniences which are above all occasioned by the climate, have caused this being (Mareiwa) to be raised to first position in the category of [833 178] protector spirits of the community. Also, the changes brought about in their economy during past centuries have contributed to this advance in status, because since the introduction of stock grazing, winter has become more and more indispensable for the maintenance of pasture, without which the stock would suffer serious losses. We have no data relating to the myths or 178 776 religion of these Indians at the time of the Conquest but what we have unearthed and the fact that there is a veritable confusion with respect to the origin and functions of Mareiwa point to the fact that, in a certain way, the Guajiro are living in a state of transition with regard to their divinities, we might almost say a moment of true creation of their gods which has not yet been definitively achieved, and for which contact with western civilization has created difficulties which by now are practically insurmountable.

775 Wanurú. As we referred extensively to the wanurú when we were speaking of sickness and the shaman, we shall add only a few details here and systematize the knowledge we have acquired about this matter up to now.

1. The wanurú can harm the Guajiro bodily and spiritually, bodily by means of such sicknesses as attack men, animals,

[151] Conclusions

177 771 789 Magic shows itself to be one of the strongest institutions of Guajiro culture despite the fact that, as we have shown throughout this study, it is gradually losing its importance in proportion to the lowering of the shaman's prestige as the spiritual leader of the group. This is due to the already mentioned factors of proseletyzing and acculturation on a rising scale, brought about by the influence of a continually increasing number of civilizado elements in the peninsula, as well as by the consequences of the acculturation experienced by the members of the society. However, it is magic that still dominates many of the aspects of the native's daily life, not to say the greater part, and it is this that we are trying to synthesize and briefly explain in this chapter.

132 182 771 789 1. Economy. The Guajiro's life, as we saw in the Introduction is strictly dependent on the tyrannically dominating climate, given the conditions of the peninsula where this community lives, relying as they do on the seasonal fluctuations of rain to which they have adapted their system of agriculture and stock grazing, essential sources of their economy. As the people's livelihood directly depends on these, the Guajiro, lacking the higher techniques of irrigation and water conservation, puts his hope of survival in methods of magic, whether they be personal, collective, or directly exercised by the curer-magician of the community. These are no other than the exorcisms carried out by the latter to attract the rains in the long summers by invoking his protector spirits and especially Mareiwa, the personification of good and of rain; or the adoration and ceremonies in honor of the iguana carried out by private individuals with the same end in view; or, in short, all the methods of magic we have enumerated in connection with the natural phenomenon of rain.

[34] 460 Also in respect to the economy we must remember the presence of women when the sowing of crops is done, which establishes a division of work by sex based on the magic association of the transmission of feminine fecundity to the seeds.

177 288 789 [152] Moreover, faced with the new phenomenon of stock grazing, the native has adapted his magic methods to this, imposing the same or similar treatments used for the members of the

6: Santa Cruz E-5 (1940) 1941
SC13 Goajiro SC13

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ASPECTS OF THE AVUNCULATE IN THE GUAJIRO CULTURE

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THE Guajira peninsula is situated in the northwest corner of Colombia, South America, roughly between the 71° and 73° W. long., and 11° and 12° N. lat. It is rather flat in contour with only some hill ranges in the eastern part. Rainfall is scarce and the vegetation is of a semi-arid type. The region is inhabited by one tribe of Indians, the Arawak-speaking Guajiro. Both culturally and linguistically the Guajira peninsula presents a uniform block.

The present writer visited the territory in the summer of 1940, but due to illness contracted there was forced to cut short his visit. Fairly full data were gathered on all phases of social culture. The present paper deals with certain aspects of one phase only, the avunculate.

The role of the maternal uncle is manifold in Guajiro culture, organized as the Guajiro are into maternal clans. Types of behavior, both prescribed and unformalized, vary, depending on the seniority of both uncle and nephew, but not on that of sister. In this paper we shall be concerned for the most part with the prescribed and voluntary relations between the oldest brother of a given woman and her oldest son, and between this oldest brother and his sisters' daughters. Other relations not involving these specified kin will be touched upon only incidentally for illustrative purposes.

?:Bellinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

before, when the casimba had dried up and the cattle had roamed round the troughs bellowing till they collapsed and died. The horses, on the other hand, had given up the ghost without complaint.

The water was already turgid; before long it would be as thick as gruel. The water we had been given by the bishop was now finished, and we had to boil the water from the casimba, which had a beastly taste and did not quench our thirst because of the salt in it. The best water is that near the coast.

The cattle and horses were thin, but the men at the well looked strong and well-nourished, as did the women. But how would they look by the time October came with its rain? It was then only July. And suppose no rain came? Or only a few showers? That had happened before. The threat of it always hung over the Indians. If the rain god Juvap turned his face from them, they were lost. There were still patches of grass here and there, but it was dry and scorched. If need be the cattle could make do with cactus, despite the long spikes that could pierce a stout leather shoe with ease. Very, very carefully the cow lets one of the oval leaves slide into her mouth, almost sucking it in, so that the spikes are bent backwards; she then starts chewing as hard as she can. Often cows have more cactus stuck in their hides than they get inside them. Horses and mules, on the other hand, apparently do not like cactus and will not do more than nibble at it. It is too slow a business to eat it. The goats seemed able to find something to eat everywhere, and are themselves eaten sooner or later. Cattle are not often slaughtered, but goat is the daily fare. Live goats are also taken as provisions on journeys, being easily led on a rope.

We had halted only in order to let the animals drink and for the Indians to fill their water containers. The Golfer needed a lot of water now—his thirst was unbounded—but the calabashes were in his wife's charge and she only allowed him an occasional gulp. Also he was having to walk, for she was tired and had mounted the donkey again. The Lad tried to enliven the company by imitating the donkeys when they

7:Bollinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

lost their loads and the mule throwing the photographer, but we were all tired and not easily amused.

I did not want to stay at that rancho. Their reception had been friendly, but they had something against the Guffer. I thought they had hesitated to receive him, and caution suggested that we ought to camp by ourselves, as long as we had people on whom we could not rely. Evening came and with it a slight, cooling breeze. Travelling was pleasant then without the heat of the sun. Knowing that the moon would rise early, we decided to go on as long as we could.

At midnight we halted in bright moonlight, lit a fire and made coffee. A couple of Indians came uninvited and squatted nearby. The coastal Indians had become infected with the vices of civilization and stole like jackdaws. We had already lost a number of small things at Arema and the other places on the coast, and had no wish to lose more. In Guajira you must take the law into your own hands.

We produced our firearms and set about cleaning them. We each had a rifle and a pistol, and also I had a number of pistols that I had bought cheap at auctions after the war and intended to use as objects of barter. We put up our camp beds under the open sky, laid our weapons beside them and told our Indians to 'sleep with one eye open', a phrase they themselves used. We assured them that we should do the same, and that our open eyes would be fixed on our baggage.

We knew that the Indians would be constantly starting up and looking round. No sound escaped their trained ears. We were not suspicious of their being in a conspiracy with the other Indians; in fact, they were quite frightened.

When we woke at daybreak, all was well. We packed up and set off again at once. Now and again we met naked Indians armed with bows and arrows. We gave tobacco to them all, as custom dictates. It is almost a sort of tax which white people have to pay in order to be able to travel in peace in Guajira. If you happen to be smoking one of the country's thin cigars and meet an Indian, you can, if you are in a hurry, take the cigar from your mouth and stick it into his, mutter a greeting, receive an answer, and ride on.

Although I had a compass and a map, such as it was,